

Dry Flower – A New Approach for Florist Uses

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Introduction

Flowers have always remained an integral part of mankind and love for natural flowers is an inherent instinct. Fresh flowers are quite attractive, but very expensive and short lived as well as available only during a particular season. Dried flower products on the other hand are long lasting and retained their aesthetic value irrespective of the season (Hiller 1994). The art of flower drying is a very age old practice. Earlier dried flowers were used in the form of herbarium by botanists for the purpose of identification of various species (Prasad *et al.* 1997). In 'The Florist' Published in 1860, author describes the techniques of drying red roses, pansies, stock and other single flowers in sand. Though drying of flowers is well known even in the past but for the first time the flowers were dried commercially in Germany (Louis and Gibson 1982).

Dried and preserved ornamental products offer a wide range of qualities like; novelty, longevity, aesthetic properties, flexibility and year round availability (Joyce 1998). Dried ornamental plant parts are generally less expensive and are sought for their everlasting and attractive appearance (Smith 2000). Very little research and development projects have been undertaken on the flower drying industry across the globe in contrast to other areas of floriculture. Numerous workers have described varied approaches/ methods to dehydrate flowers and other ornamental plant parts (Dubois and Joyce 1989; Bhutani 1995; Westland 1995). Dried flowers are a good standby for the florist's, since designs can be made up during the slack periods and arrangement can be displayed where fresh flowers are unsuitable from the grower's point of view and the price is less than for equivalent fresh flowers (Salinger 1987).



Advantages of dry flower

1. A variety of products can be prepared.
2. Requires less maintenance.
3. Biodegradable.
4. Tolerant to most temperature.
5. Offers wide range of occurring in fresh flower handling.
6. Less transport cost.
7. More flexibility than fresh flower.
8. It can survive the heat of summer and cold of winter.
9. Dried flowers are available throughout the year.
10. It can be reused several times compared to fresh flowers.

Collecting plant materials

- ✓ Avoid collecting plants when they are wet or moist from dew.
- ✓ Use a sharp knife or pruning shears to cut flowers and plant materials.
- ✓ Select plant materials that are without insect or disease problems.
- ✓ Place stems in water while harvesting to prevent wilting.
- ✓ Some flowers may hold color better if allowed to stand in water for a few hours.
- ✓ Start the drying process as soon as possible after cutting.
- ✓ Collect more plant materials than needed to allow for some loss.
- ✓ Be mindful of where you collect plant materials; never remove unlawful or endangered plants.

Suitable dried flowers

Limonium, Acrolinum, Helichysum, Gerbera, Roses, Tulips, Chrysanthemum, Globe amaranth 'Forest Pink', Pansias, Baby Breath, Ageratum Stellar Blue, Larkspur Guardian Lavender, Hydrangea, African Daisy Soprano Straw Flower and Celosia etc.

Air Drying (Method)

Steps for air drying

1. Cut flowers of good quality at prime conditions or slightly immature.
2. Remove foliage from stems. If stems are weak or become brittle after drying, remove them and wire the flowers.

3. Group the stems into small bunches and tie with a rubber band. It will pull tighter as the stems shrink during drying.
4. Hang upside down in a warm, dry, dark area such as an attic, closet.
5. Furnace room. Avoid damp rooms or direct sun on the flowers. Good air circulation is important.
6. Allow to remain until thoroughly dried. This normally takes two to three weeks.

A new approach for Florist uses

- A. Cooking** - edible dried flowers are delicious in cakes and other desserts, and many of them make wonderful teas. You might experiment with making your own tea blends, using green and black teas as well as herbs.



- B. Sachets** - Sew little aromatic sachets to include in dresser drawers and closets. You can even fashion no-sew varieties by tying little muslin or fine mesh bags.



Sachet



- C. Celebrations** - Make dried flowers the focal point of a centerpiece. A large clear bowl of hibiscus flowers or a basket of lavender flowers will add color to a side table or dinner setting, for example. (Choose aromatic flowers for around the house but less fragrant ones for the dinner table, so they don't interfere with the aroma of the food.)
- D. Candle making** - If you make your own candles, you can easily incorporate dried flowers into your molds. But even if you're not a candle maker, you add dried flowers to the outside of your plain candles. Simply place crushed dried flowers on wax paper. Pour a little melted wax over the flowers, and then roll candle in the flowers.
- E. Papers** - Dried flowers can also be incorporated into the process of making your own paper. or, for handmade cards, simply apply dried flowers to good quality cardstock with a little glue and a paintbrush. Dried flowers can also be used to decorate scrapbooking pages.
- F. Dyes** - Some dried flowers make excellent dyes for cloth and for Easter eggs, too. Experiments with hibiscus flowers for a reddish blue/lavender result and safflower petals for a pale yellow. A mordant will help give your color staying power.
- G. Bathing & other body care** – The best herbal baths include dried flowers. Sprinkle them directly in your bathwater, or make an herbal infusion and pour it into your bath. In other body care, infusions of herbal flowers are also the basis of many lotions, toners, facial steam, masks, herbal hair rinses, and sprays.



- H. Cleaning** – Dried flowers are great additions to DIY cleaning products. They partners nicely with citrusy scents and mints, too.
- I. Gifting** – spring of dried flowers look lovely atop a package, in the midst of a bow. You might also scatter dried petals in your gift card.
- J. Potpourri** – A collection of colors and textures can be combined to make a potpourri. Make the scent long lasting by including a fixative such as orris root, and enhance the scent with essential oils, if you like.

Potpourri



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